

July 26, 2011

Dear Chair Parker,

As leaders and stakeholders in our community, we wish to commend you and your colleagues on your work in establishing the applied science and technology university model at the University of South Florida Polytechnic ("USFP"). Your vision will not only supply higher-skilled graduates for our local businesses, but also graduates that will matriculate along the I-4 High Tech Corridor, to the research centers in Tampa and Orlando, and throughout the state of Florida and beyond.

Due to the current budget constraints in Florida and nationwide, it is imperative that we deliver education with focus and cost efficiency in mind. We applaud the Board of Governors' recent decision to study the existing structure of the State University System (SUS). There is not a more critical time for Florida to make strategic decisions in providing access to its citizens for college degrees that are needed to compete at a global level. It has been recognized by you and many others that Florida needs to put in place a new, highly-diversified economy. We believe that USFP is a critical piece of this emerging new algorithm. For these and reasons outlined below, we strongly urge you to consider supporting USFP as a separate, independent university.

The stated reasons for polytechnic education are many. Consider the following:

China is graduating more than four times as many engineers as the U.S.

Florida is 40th in the U.S. in educating scientists and engineers as a percentage of the population.

It is estimated that Florida will have a shortfall of 100,000 science and technology professionals by 2015.

Every comprehensive study of the U.S education system notes that far greater investment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) is needed at all levels, especially if the U.S. wishes to remain competitive for 21st century career opportunities and industry growth.

We strongly believe that the Polytechnic Model is a direct and cost-effective method of applied technical degrees in this time of need. It has a highly-focused curriculum in key industry drivers such as engineering, information technology, and applied health professions, versus the myriad of offerings at more traditional universities that cover everything from anthropology to zoology.

The polytechnic and technology universities that currently exist in the U.S. and abroad have been highly successful due to this concentrated focus, as well as the freedom they have had to quickly innovate and respond to industry needs. High quality polytechnic education cannot be delivered if it is immersed in highly-layered bureaucracies that are wedded to protecting traditional cultures and programs.

As a result, the current USF "system" model does not work as effectively as it needs to for a university model as unique as USFP. Given the sizable investments that the state and our region have already made in this university, it is our strong belief it should now be structured in a way to maximize its future success.

We have concerns that the present structure will impede not foster growth. Specifically, this is due to a mismatch of cultures: basic versus applied research; traditional versus emerging disciplines; protection of disciplinary and programmatic turf versus the need to quickly develop new curriculum.

We are also concerned that the present structure will make the recruitment of superior faculty extremely difficult and challenging. Potential faculty members have a sense that USF is the only, and will be the only, doctoral-granting institution in the USF system. As a result, it leads to a second-class mentality that is not conducive to recruiting faculty stars.

In addition, we are concerned that regional needs and priorities will be overlooked given the current structure. While we recognize USF calls itself a "system", that system has never been formally recognized or approved in Florida Statute to our knowledge. As a result, we have concerns that representation and decision-making bodies and the administrative structure of the system will change frequently and will be so concentrated in Tampa that the needs of this campus in terms of personnel, fundraising, athletics, research, and future capital projects will be overlooked. As a result, this has the potential to be a restrictive, combative, and turf-oriented environment. Independence gives local control and a streamlined approach to administration and solutions that specifically impact USFP.

For these and many other reasons, we feel that USFP's independence is paramount. Common sense dictates that a campus with a distinct mission should control its own destiny. This local control will allow for higher quality, faster growth, better brand identity, and more potential for fundraising. We respectfully request that you allow us to present our views concerning this issue to the Board of Governors.

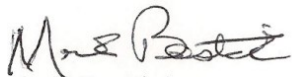
Again, we are extremely thankful for your support of this exciting institution. In addition, we respectfully request that you consider USFP's independence, so that it can more quickly meet the needs of our community and Florida.

Sincerely,



Barney Barnett, Vice Chairman

Publix Super Markets



Mark Bostick, President
Comcar Industries, Inc.



Douglas A. Lockwood, III
Peterson & Myers, P.A.



George Wm. Tinsley, Sr.

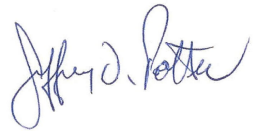
President & CEO, PenGeo, Inc.



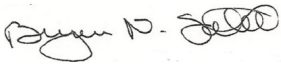
Richard E. Straughn
Straughn & Turner, P.A.



Victor B. Story, Jr., President
The Story Companies



Jeffrey D. Potter, Mayor
City of Winter Haven



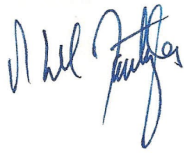
Bryan N. Saterbo, Co-Chairman
Colorado Boxed Beef Company



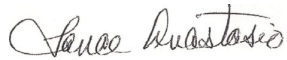
Albert B. Cassidy, President
Cassidy Holdings



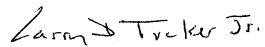
H. Paul Senft, Jr., Director
Haines City Economic Dev. Council



R. Todd Dantzler, CCIM
Choice-Dantzler Properties, Inc.



Lance Anastasio, President/CEO
Winter Haven Hospital



Larry Tucker, Jr.,
Tucker Construction & Engineering, Inc.



Ingram Leedy
Elephant Outlook



Rick Dantzler
Frost Van den Boom & Smith, P.A.



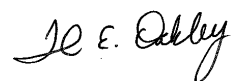
David P. Lyons, Chairman
Saddle Creek Corporation



Mike Carter, Mayor
City of Lake Wales



Jesse Jackson, Superintendent
Lake Wales Charter School System



Thomas E. Oakley, President
Oakley Transport, Inc.



Wesley Beck, President
Aspyre Properties



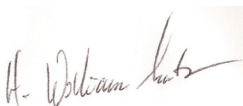
Brian G. Philpot

Land South Group

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Sam Nimah, President of Operations

Southern Wine & Spirits

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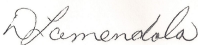
H. William Mutz, President

Lakeland Auto Mall

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David D. Hallock, Jr.", written horizontally.

David D. Hallock, Jr.

Gray-Robinson, P.A.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Damien Lamendola", written horizontally.

Damien Lamendola, President & CEO

WellDyne, Inc.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Tolentino", written horizontally.

Michael Tolentino, M.D.

Center for Retina & Macular Disease



Steve Scruggs, Executive Director

Lakeland Economic Development Council



Carl J. "Bud" Strang III

Six/Ten Corporation



S. Steve Mosely, CFO

Mid-Florida Credit Union

cc: Board of Governors